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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 015278

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/11/2015

TAGS: [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [EAD](#) [MASS](#) [PGOV](#) [PK](#) [PREL](#) [PAS](#)

SUBJECT: TFPK01: PAKISTAN EARTHQUAKE -- DISASTER RESPONSE
TAKING SHAPE

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 15130

[B](#). ISLAMABAD 15208

[C](#). ISLAMABAD 15254

[D](#). 11 OCT 2005 GRENCIK/HUNT-TASK FORCE 1 EMAIL

Classified By: DCM Patricia Butenis, Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary and Introduction: The Government of Pakistan (GOP) now has a firmer grasp on managing relief efforts, but still faces coordination problems between its civilian and military leaders. The Prime Minister's coordination center is considering a USG proposal to have embassy liaison officers assigned to its working groups; If the GOP agrees, the liaison team will assist the GOP as it determines its assistance requirements and reconstruction needs. U.S. military and civilian helicopters are flying dozens of sorties, transporting relief workers and supplies to the affected areas. U.S. military planes are arriving with humanitarian assistance cargo, but the number of incoming flights has been limited by the capacity of the Chaklala air field to manage a flood of international relief flights. The GOP is still grappling with how it will manage and distribute donor contributions, but is open to U.S. offers of technical assistance. Despite a generally positive assessment of the GOP's management of the crisis thus far by NGOs and international relief coordinators, a frustrated Pakistani public is beginning to criticize the GOP for a slow and inadequate response to the millions traumatized by the earthquake. End summary and introduction.

GOP Relief Coordination

[1](#)2. (SBU) In a morning meeting with the Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Coordination Group, Embassy officials briefed the PM's Additional Secretary Zamir Akram on USG assistance on the ground and in the pipeline. Post representatives also outlined the other assistance that the U.S. could offer Pakistan. Akram said that the GOP has a good idea of the extent of the devastation in urban areas, but does not have a clear grasp of the situation in outlying areas. Akram broke assistance requirements into two categories: immediate needs through late October (shelter; pre-cooked food, dry rations; bottled water and water purification tablets; medical supplies), followed by medium-term materiel (pre-fab housing; winterized tents; warm clothing). Akram responded favorably to the Embassy's offer of disaster relief planning teams, logistic planning and tracking capability; and coordinating offers of assistance with assessed needs. The GOP is considering an Embassy offer to assign liaison officers to work directly with the Disaster Coordination Group (and sub-groups); post has identified a four-person interagency liaison team that would be available to support the Coordination Group on site. The embassy liaisons have already passed a complete menu of available USG assistance for the GOP to consider at its federal-level interagency coordination meeting Wednesday morning, post expects that the Coordination Group will pass back the GOP's preferences by midday October [1](#)2.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Illustrating the close cooperation that is developing between USG agencies and GOP relief coordinators, the Pakistan Army today sent the Office of Defense Representative - Pakistan (ODRP) detailed reports on Pak relief sorties, incoming assistance, loads shifted, etc., along with maps of supply lines and photos. Post has forwarded these reports to Task Force-1 via email.

USG Relief Flights - Military

[1](#)4. (S) ODRP reports that two (2) C-130s and three (3) C-17s carrying relief supplies and personnel will have arrived in Pakistan on October 11. The military airport at Chaklala is operating at full capacity, leading the Pakistani Air Force (PAF) to restrict, for a time, fixed wing aircraft to nighttime take-offs/landings, reserving day-light hours for rotary wing craft. PAF difficulties in managing incoming traffic have led to delays in the arrival of other U.S. aircraft originally scheduled to arrive today.

[1](#)5. (S) The eight (8) U.S. Army helicopters that arrived October 10 began flying sorties at first light on October 11, completing 14 sorties (7 sorties returned to Chaklala due to adverse weather conditions). The helos transported 223 passengers, more than 32,000 lbs. of supplies, and returned

102 evacuated casualties to Islamabad. Four (4) MI-17s from the Afghan National Army, which arrived in the afternoon, will be ready to join the U.S. helos on missions tomorrow. Two German helicopters have also arrived and will be folded into the U.S. operation.

16. (S) ODRP reported that there are requests pending for ten (10) CH-53s, ten (10) UN-60s, and 4-6 medevac helos. If approved, the estimated time of arrival in Pakistan would be at least a week.

USG Relief Flights - NAS

17. (SBU) Post's Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) Air Wing (a joint project with the Ministry of Interior) helicopters flew five (5) HU-60s for 15 sorties, including airlifting a Japanese medical team and their supplies to Battagram. Following a request from the Swiss Embassy, NAS will work on providing airlift to the four-person Swiss relief team and their supplies from Mansehra to a location further north. NAS helo teams are working flat out; with indications that the GOP may begin allowing night missions, NAS' problem will be managing crew rest and a pilot shortage.

Donor Coordination

18. (U) Given persistent communication gaps between GOP military and civilian relief coordinators, USG agencies may have a better grasp of the nexus between donor contributions, incoming assistance and its distribution. USAID/OFDA are in close contact with NGOs on the ground, and the UN is continuing daily coordination meetings with donors and NGOs.

In a meeting with USAID and DART representatives today, the MOF previewed a GOP's proposal to task the Prime Minister's Coordination Group with immediate relief efforts, then transferring long-term reconstruction oversight to the MOF. The U.S. officials suggested the inherent disconnects that could follow if relief efforts are not closely knitted to eventual reconstruction, and offered other models for the GOP to consider. USAID and DART will meet again with the MOF and other bilateral donors tomorrow.

19. (SBU) Both the UAE and Kuwait have announced donations of USD 100 million to assist Pakistan, with Kuwait's offer split evenly between concessionary loans and cash. Post will carefully monitor how the GOP elects to use these funds and stands ready to offer assistance. (Note: We would welcome updates from Embassy Abu Dhabi and Embassy Kuwait on the donors' disbursement plans. End note.) Private donors have also stepped up: The U.S.-Pakistani Business Council has already donated USD 100,000; Boeing has advised that they will announce a USD 1 million donation on October 12; and the Coca-Cola Company/Coca-Cola Foundation have pledged USD 1 million to Pakistani relief efforts and USD 1 million to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Shifting Public Mood

10. (SBU) In an echo of U.S. public reaction in the days following Hurricane Katrina, Pakistani public opinion starting to turn against President Musharraf and the government for not reacting swiftly enough to the crisis, particularly as bad weather (severe thunderstorms accompanied by hail), equipment shortages and blocked roads hamper the government's relief efforts. Survivors' expectations for immediate response have not been matched by actual delivery. Sporadic episodes of looting and raids on relief centers only add to survivors' feelings of vulnerability. The Pakistani and international press are increasingly airing reports critical of the President and the government's efforts. For example, Survivors in Muzaffarabad and NWFP asked why rescue teams did not arrive in their regions until Monday, complaining that the GOP bureaucracy had been paralyzed in day-long coordination meetings. Keenly sensitive to criticism, the government has defended its efforts, pointing to the numerous obstacles to transporting relief to remote mountainous regions. The President, Prime Minister and Army spokesperson have all appeared on national television, assuring Pakistani that the government is deploying all its assets to assist those in need. Ironically, the consensus in the NGO community is that the GOP response to the earthquake has been relatively good -- a perspective shared by this Embassy.

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